

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 IGA-02 EB-07 COME-00

TRSE-00 AGR-05 STR-04 DOTE-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 /050 W

----- 011344

P R 150746Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4004

INFO AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MASERU

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 1128

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELTN ESTC PFOR MZ RH SF

SUBJ: RHODESIA'S RAIL LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA

REF: A) STATE 56764, B) MAPUTO 216, C) DURBAN 79,  
D) JOHANNESBURG 349, E) CAPE TOWN 259

1. INFORMATION REQUESTED BY REFTEL (A) BASED ON PRIMARY  
SOURCES IS ALMOST UNAVAILABLE - FOR EXAMPLE WE WERE ABLE  
TO GET ADVANCE COPY OF SA RAILWAYS ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR  
ENDING MARCH 31, 1975 - AND DATED DEC 23, 1975. ONLY  
REFERENCE TO RHODESIAN TRAFFIC WERE NORTHBOUND TONNAGES  
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FROM MAFEKING OF 2.328 MILLION TONS FOR YEAR OR A DAILY

AVERAGE OF 6,377 TONS. (THIS INCLUDES TRAFFIC FOR BOTH RHODESIA AND BOTSWANA.) REPORT NOTES LINE WAS FREQUENTLY CONGESTED DURING THE YEAR SUGGESTING THAT ABOVE TONNAGE IS CLOSE TO MAXIMUM. ON THE NEW LINE NORTH FROM BEIT BRIDGE DURING THE SIX MONTHS FROM THE OPENING OF THIS LINE, 292 THOUSAND TONS MOVED NORTH. REPORT GIVES NO SOUTH-BOUND TONNAGES, PRESUMABLY IN DEFERENCE TO RHODESIAN DESIRES FOR SECRECY.

2. ON DATA FROM SECONDARY SOURCES, THE USUALLY RELIABLE FINANCIAL MAIL (FM) REVIEWED RHODESIAN ACCESS PROBLEM IN ITS MARCH 5, 1976 ISSUE. IT ESTIMATES THAT JUST PRIOR TO MOZAMBIKAN EMBARGO RHODESIAN EXPORTS THROUGH BEIRA AND MAPUTO AMOUNTED TO 25 TO 30 PERCENT OF TOTAL. THIS TRAFFIC CONSISTED MAINLY OF CHROME AND OTHER MINERALS AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE, PRINCIPALLY MAIZE AND SUGAR FROM HIPPO VALLEY AND TRIANGLE (IN LOWVELD OF SOUTHEASTERN RHODESIA). THE PRESENT LEVEL IS REDUCTION FROM FORMER ONE OF 75-80 PERCENT THROUGH MOZAMBIQUE. CHROME STOCKS AT MAPUTO ARE ESTIMATED AT 10-12,000 TONS BUT IT IS UNCERTAIN HOW MUCH IS OF RHODESIAN ORIGIN. FM NOTES THAT RHODESIA HAS DIVERTED MUCH OF ITS FERRO ALLOY TRADE IN RECENT MONTHS FROM MOZAMBIQUE TO SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS. IT ESTIMATES SA RAILWAYS AND HARBORS COULD COPE WITH MOST RHODESIAN EXPORTS, INCLUDING CHROME. (COMMENT: SEE DURBAN REFTEL FOR MORE INFORMATION ON DURBAN PORT SITUATION.)

3. TWO RAIL CONNECTIONS TO RHODESIA FROM SOUTH AFRICA EXIST; ONE VIA BOTSWANA OPERATED FROM MAFEKING NORTH OF RHODESIAN RAILWAYS UNDER CONTRACT TO BOTSWANA GOVT; THE OTHER THE NEW LINK VIA RUTEGA AND BEIT BRIDGE. CAPACITY OF THIS SECOND LINK NOT KNOWN FOR SURE. FM REFERS TO DISCUSSIONS IN AUGUST 1975 AND QUOTES RHODESIAN TRANSPORT MINISTER HAWKINS STATING TALKS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIAN RAILWAYS SHOWED THIS LINE (AND THE CONNECTING MESSINA-PRETORIA LINE) COULD HANDLE ALL RHODESIAN EXPORT/IMPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR NEXT 10 YEARS OR EVEN MORE. FM COMMENTED THAT THIS DEPENDED ON EXTENSION OF CENTRAL TRAIN

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CONTROL SYSTEM AND ADDITIONAL CROSSLINKS. THIS WOULD GIVE GROSS LINE CAPACITY OF "MORE THAN 3,000 TONS PER DAY/ OR A DAILY NET RATE OF "AROUND 7 MILLION TONS YEARLY" WITH CURRENT RHODESIAN EXPORT TONNAGES "GUESSTIMATED" AT 4.5 MILLION TONS YEARLY. FM NOTED OIL IMPORTS ALREADY DIVERTED FROM SONAREP REFINERY IN MOZAMBIQUE WITH MOST IF NOT ALL NOW BEING TRANSPORTED VIA RUTENGA USING OIL STORAGE TANKS AT MESSINA IN FAR NORTHERN TRANSVAAL.

4. OTHER SOUTH AFRICAN RAIL LINK TO RHODESIA VIA MAFEKING INTO BOTSWANA AND NORTH APPEARS TO BE OPERATING AT CAPACITY ACCORDING ECONOMIST QUARTERLY ECONOMIC REVIEW FOR RHODESIA AND MALAWI (NO. 2 OF 1975) WITH 14 PERCENT TAKEN UP BY BOTSWANA TRAFFIC. FM NOTED GOB RECEIVES R2.6 MILLION (\$3 MILLION) ANNUALLY FROM ROYALTIES AND R350,000 (\$400,000) ANNUALLY FOR WAY LEAVE FOR LAND ON WHICH RAILWAY OPERATES, BUT ON QUESTION OF BOTSWANA'S CLOSING THIS RAIL LINK, FM ONLY COMMENTS HOWEVER THAT SELIBE PIKWE SERVED BY TWO SPURS OPERATED BY RHODESIAN RAILWAYS ON AGENCY BASIS.

5. ACCORDING FM, RHODESIAN IMPORTS ARE LOW (AMOUNT NOT SPECIFIED). FM MENTIONS TRANSIT TRAFFIC INCLUDES COPPER FROM ZAIRE BUT IT DID NOT MENTION PETROLEUM MOVEMENTS INTO ZAIRE'S SHABA PROVINCE FROM SOUTH AFRICA WHICH ARE REPORTEDLY HEAVY AND CRUCIAL TO ZAIRIAN COPPER PRODUCTION FOLLOWING CLOSURE OF BENGUELA RAILWAY AND ALSO BECAUSE OF ACCIDENT AT NDOLA REFINERY WHICH NORMALLY SUPPLIED ONLY TWO-THIRDS SHABA REQUIREMENTS. (COMMENT: DATA FURNISHED BY ECON COUNSELOR NETTLES AT KINSHASA DURING RECENT VISIT TO PRETORIA.) PRESUMABLY THIS TRAFFIC IS MOVING ACROSS THE VICTORIA FALLS BRIDGE AND TRANSITING ZAMBIA DESPITE ZAMBIAN NON-USE OF THIS ROUTE. RAILWAY MAPS AVAILABLE HERE SHOW NO OTHER LINK INTO SHABA. NETTLES ALSO TOLD US SAR MADE AVAILABLE 600 RAIL CARS FOR POL IN DRUMS AND RECONDITIONED 72 ZAIRIAN TANK CARS TO HANDLE THIS TRAFFIC.

6. RHODESIAN TRADE WITH MALAWI WILL ALSO END, ACCORDING TO FM. EXPORTS HAVE CONSISTED OF COAL VIA MOZAMBIQUE RAILWAY, FOOD, FERTILIZER, PACKAGING  
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MATERIALS AND CRUSHED STONE FOR ROAD BUILDING. TWO TRANSPORT COMPANIES IN RHODESIA, CLAN LINE AND NORTHEASTERN TRANSPORT (GLENS TRANSPORT) WILL HAVE TO CEASE THEIR REGULAR RUNS BETWEEN SALISBURY AND BLANTYRE.

7. COMMENTS:

(A) FROM FOREGOING WE NOTE THE OBVIOUS THAT SOUTH AFRICA HOLDS SOME STRONG ECONOMIC TRUMPS IN DEALING WITH RHODESIA, ALTHOUGH WE PERCEIVE TWO WEAKNESSES IN SOUTH AFRICAN HAND - ONE IS ITS SUPPORT TO ZAIRE THROUGH RAIL TRANSIT TO SHABA, THE OTHER IS A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY, EXCEPT FOR OIL, IN THE RHODESIAN ECONOMY.  
(B) SOUTH AFRICAN RAIL AND PORT FACILITIES APPEAR TO BE ABLE TO HANDLE RHODESIAN TRAFFIC EXCEPT FOR MAIZE EXPORTS. HERE SA HAS HAD DIFFICULTY IN HANDLING ITS OWN

BUMPER CROPS OVER PAST TWO YEARS AND WITH GOOD MAIZE PROSPECTS FOR THIRD YEAR RUNNING WE ANTICIPATE NO CHANGE IN THIS SITUATION. PORT FACILITIES FOR BULK CARGOES SUCH AS CHROME ORE ARE DISCUSSED IN JOHANNESBURG'S 349, DURBAN'S 79 AND CAPE TOWN'S 259, WHICH INDICATE NO SERIOUS PHYSICAL PROBLEMS EXIST IN DIVERTING RHODESIAN SHIPMENTS THROUGH SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS. HOWEVER, THE LONGER RAIL HAUL WILL BE MORE COSTLY ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF PROPOSED RAIL INCREASES - NEARLY 17 PERCENT ON BULK COMMODITIES SUCH AS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE AND BULK GOODS SUCH AS ORES. WHILE MAIZE EXPORTS MAY PRESENT PROBLEM IN SHORT RUN, WE ANTICIPATE THAT OPENING OF RICHARDS BAY TO BULK CARGO ON APRIL 1 AND TO GENERAL CARGO LATER IN YEAR WILL PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL MEASURE OF RELIEF.

(C) ONE FACTOR IN MAIZE SITUATION IS THAT SA WITH SIZABLE EXPORTABLE SURPLUS WILL BE IN POSITION TO PROVIDE FOOD AID TO MOZAMBIQUE TO REPLACE LOST RHODESIAN SOURCES. THIS WOULD LIGHTEN BURDEN ON SA PORT FACILITIES SINCE WE ASSUME THIS WOULD MOVE BY RAIL TO MAPUTO FROM TRANSVAAL. THE EXTENT OF SA WILLINGNESS TO AID MOZAMBIQUE THROUGH THE SUPPLY OF FOODSTUFFS IS UNKNOWN. WE DO NOT THINK IT WOULD EMBARGO SUCH SHIPMENTS HOWEVER WITH THE CURRENT FOREIGN EXCHANGE DIFFICULTIES IN SA, IT MIGHT BE RELUCTANT TO EXTEND GRANT AID OR LONG-TERM CREDITS.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, EMBARGOES, INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION, RAILROAD ACCESS, PORTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 15 MAR 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976PRETOR01128  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760096-0987  
**From:** PRETORIA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760360/aaaacatp.tel  
**Line Count:** 202  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 STATE 56764, 76 MAPUTO 216, 76 DURBAN 79  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 23 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <23 APR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <17 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** RHODESIA'S RAIL LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA  
**TAGS:** ELTN, ESTC, PFOR, MZ, RH, SF  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006